

## Breeder of Merit – Important information Regarding Health Testing

As a participant in the Breeder of Merit program, you have agreed to the following conditions as outlined on both the Basic and Advanced applications:

- Must be in good standing with the American Kennel Club
- Must be a member of an AKC club (this is through out your participation, not just when you join)
- Must certify that applicable health screens as required by the parent club are performed on the sires and dams of your litters while enrolled in the program and be prepared to provide proof of testing if requested.
- Ensure the 100% registration of the puppies produced in your litters.

### Let's talk Health Testing

As a Breeder of Merit, you are responsible for the health testing on both sires and dams when you are the litter owner whether you own, co-own, or lease the dam and even if you do not own the sire. When you breed a litter, you make a choice. Please ask if the sire has health testing, require proof, just not a yes from the sire owner. Make sure that you have the same understanding of what is required.

Required health testing for all breeds as given to us by each parent club is listed on the AKC website at <https://www.akc.org/breeder-programs/breed-health-testing-requirements/>

Any litter bred after 2017 must meet these requirements. Of course, for sires of litters from frozen semen collected prior to those requirements will be exempt.

If you do not want to be listed as owner of a co-owned litter, then execute a lease. You can remove yourself from responsibility for the litter without relinquishing your ownership of the dam. Leases are free for Breeders of Merit

**Listing on Marketplace.** You get free litter listings on Marketplace for your enrolled breed because those puppies should be from health tested parents. Consumers searching for a new puppy are assuming health testing has been done when dealing with a listing that has the Breeder of Merit badge. **DO NOT** advertise on Marketplace if you cannot provide proof of the required testing, or plainly state that testing for the parents is not complete, in the (hopefully) rare situation where this was an unintended breeding.

Be aware that parent clubs, referral chairmen, animal rights activists, and your arch nemesis are reviewing listings on Marketplace and will report you. I will be forced to require your records and remove you from the program if you are not in compliance.

**Applying for Advanced Levels of Achievement.** It is plainly stated on the application that you must be able to supply proof of testing for your 3 most recent litters, as well as the 100% registration...but we are talking about health testing today. Do not apply if you have not completed health testing on those 3 litters. I will check and I will ask. If I don't get the proof, I will not only deny your application, but you may be suspended from the program until your testing is caught up, or you may even be removed.

We want the Breeder of Merit designation to be meaningful. Health testing is one of the hallmarks of the program. It should stand for conscientious breeding for the health and welfare of the breed, healthy pets in homes, and not just titles.

Just a note for those submitting their Advanced Recognition applications, you do not need to send me links to OFA if your dog has a CHIC number or the testing is recorded there. If the testing is not recorded on a publicly accessible database, I will need copies of that testing submitted. OFA is now sending us CHIC numbers along with Hips, Elbows, and Eyes if the dog's permanent id was verified at the time of testing. If your dog is 'Clear by Parentage' I must be told as I will ask you for proof. Both parents must have proof of testing. I will only allow Clear by Parentage for one generation. I will not research an entire pedigree. If the results for more than one generation are assumed clear, mutations and errors in reporting can be multiplied resulting in erroneous assumptions.

Please review the required health tests listed on our website. If you feel that the club is requiring non-relevant testing or tests for obscure diseases contact the club's health committee if you are a member. They can verify that the testing we have listed is what they intended, and optional tests aren't being listed as required tests.

One last note, DNA eye tests are not a substitute for CAER/CERF eye testing if required by the parent club. Examination by a veterinary ophthalmologist can identify other conditions that may be hereditary or Breeder Options (i.e. retinal detachment, cataracts, glaucoma, colobomas, persistent pupillary membranes, distichia, etc.)

Thank you to all of you that comply with the spirit of the program and are proud of your Breeder of Merit designation. If these requirements conflict with your goals, please let us know to unenroll you. No judgement, we will understand that the program is not for you.